

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 219417 TOSEC 260021

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ORIGIN SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 219417 TOSEC 260021

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ISRAELI OIL DRILLING IN GULF OF SUEZ

1. AMOCO HAS EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN TO DEPARTMENT OFFICERS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD MOVED A DRILLING RIG INTO AN AMOCO CONCESSION AREA EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE IN THE GULF, NOT FAR FROM THE SITE OF THE RECENT INCIDENT (SITE 304-1) TO AN AMOCO DRILLING RIG. AMOCO HAS BEEN CONCERNED NOT ONLY THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT BEGIN DRILLING ON THE PRESENT SITE OF THE EQUIPMENT BUT THAT THEY MIGHT MOVE INTO SITE 304-1 IF THEY ONCE MANAGED TO INDUCE AMOCO TO ABANDON THE LATTER SITE.

2. AMOCO OFFICIAL INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT SEPTEMBER 3 THAT THEY HAD SENT A HELICOPTER UP TO AN EXTREMELY HIGH ALTITUDE (PRESUMABLY OVER THE EGYPTIAN SIDE OF THE MEDIAN LINE IN THE GULF) IN AN EFFORT TO GET A GOOD ENOUGH LOOK AT THE ISRAELI EQUIPMENT TO IDENTIFY ITS NATURE AND ACTIVITY. AS A RESULT OF THIS, THEY SAY THE EQUIPMENT THEY HAD THOUGHT
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PAGE 02 STATE 219417 TOSEC 260021

WAS A DRILLING RIG NOW LOOKS MORE LIKE A FLOATING CON-

STRUCTION BARGE WITH A CRANE ON IT, RATHER THAN A DRILLING RIG. THEY NOTE THAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN MOVED IN TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR A DRILLING RIG, BUT THAT WOULD BE SPECULATION.

3. COMMENT: EVEN IF THE ISRAELIS DO BEGIN TO DRILL IN THE AREA WHERE THIS FLOATING CRANE IS NOW LOCATED, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT THEY WOULD DO THE SAME AT SITE 304-1 EVEN IF AMOCO WERE BARRED FROM RETURNING THERE. 304-1 IS AN AMOCO CONCESSION DATING FROM BEFORE 1967, AND AS SUCH WE UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELIS CONSIDER IT TO BE A VALID AMOCO CONCESSION. ACCORDING TO AMOCO, THE CONCESSION WHICH IS THE SITE OF THE FLOATING CRANE WAS GRANTED TO THEM BY THE EGYPTIANS AFTER 1967 AND WE UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELIS WOULD CONSIDER THIS NOT A VALID AMOCO CONCESSION AND THEREFORE FAIR GAME FOR ISRAEL. ROBINSON

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